

Washington State Patrol Media Release

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“Clearinghouse Assists in the Recovery of 102 Missing Children”

The Washington State Patrol, Missing Children Clearinghouse (MCC) assisted local law enforcement agencies and families in the recovery of 102 missing children during the first seven months of 2005. The Clearinghouse is dedicated to providing resources and assistance to law enforcement, families, and others in the location and return of missing children.

With the establishment of the Hope Act in 1999, the Clearinghouse is also responsible for collecting data on missing juveniles reported to law enforcement. The Clearinghouse collected data on 13,268 missing juveniles which is a 4 percent increase in comparison to the previous year. Moreover, 98 percent of all missing juvenile reports are considered runaways.

The Clearinghouse was created by the legislature in 1985 with the passage of RCW 13.60.010. The Clearinghouse coordinates the exchange of information among law enforcement, custodial parents, citizens, schools, social service agencies, and other interested stakeholders regarding the location and return of missing children. The Clearinghouse is a resource, not an investigative unit.

The duties and functions of the Clearinghouse are specified by state law and are as follows:

- Maintenance and operation of a toll-free 24-hour telephone hotline (Over 1,400 calls received year to date).
- Distribution of information to local law enforcement agencies, school districts, the Department of Social and Health Services, and the general public regarding missing children.
- Maintenance of a regularly updated computerized link with national and other statewide missing person systems or clearinghouses.

“I am very proud of the work performed by the passionate personnel assigned to the Clearinghouse which assisted our law enforcement partners and others in the recovery of 102 children since January of 2005,” said Investigative Assistance Division Commander Mark Couey.

(more)

Families are reminded if a child becomes missing, a report should immediately be filed with the law enforcement agency who has jurisdiction where the child was last seen. Reports can also be filed with the State Patrol's Clearinghouse at 1-800-543-5678.

For more information on missing and exploited children you can go to the Washington State Patrol website at www.wsp.wa.gov/missing or the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at www.missingkids.org.

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